

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the above Amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested. By the present Amendment, claims 1, 3, 7, 9 and 16 have been amended and claims 2, 4, 8 and 10 have been cancelled. The Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter has been added by this Amendment.

I. Rejection of Claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. §112:

In the Action, claims 1-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite and failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Specifically, claims 1, 7 and 16, "arranged to supported the coupling device" was cited as being grammatically incorrect by the Examiner.

By the present Amendment, claims 1, 7 and 16 have been amended in order to overcome this rejection. These Amendments are being made merely to correct a grammatical error and, as such, do not narrow the scope of the claims.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. §112 is respectfully requested.

II. Rejection of Claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a):

In the Action, claims 1-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,689,867 to Katz in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,410,784 to Katz.

Katz '867 discloses an interchangeable clasp including a clasp body (100) having two connector members (110) connected at opposite edges of the clasp body. The connector members (110) include a hollow cylindrical sleeve (111), and a rigid rod (112) which is slidably positioned within the hollow cylindrical sleeve (111). The spring is provided to bias the distal end of the rigid rod toward a distal position and to allow for movement of the rigid rod. The connector members (110) are configured generally as cylinders so as to slidably fit within the receiving recess (120) Col. 2, lines 65-67. The receiving recess (120) is defined by a hollow cylinder whose outer wall (121) only partially only partially envelops the circumference and full length of the cylinder leaving a

longitudinal opening through which one of the connector members (110) can be inserted. Col. 3, lines 5-9

Katz '784 discloses an interchangeable clasp (1) having a body (2) and a connector (3). The connector (3) is configured generally as a cylinder so as to slidably fit within recess (21) in body (2). In one embodiment, the body (2) includes three recesses (21) into which three corresponding connectors (3) may be engaged.

By the present Amendment, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of previously presented claims 2 and 4, now cancelled. Likewise, claim 7 has been amended to include the limitations of previously presented claims 8 and 10, also cancelled. Claim 16 has not been amended other than to address the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, above. Although the Examiner rejected claims 2, 4, 8 and 10 in as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,689,867 to Katz in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,410,784 to Katz, the Applicant respectfully submits that neither Katz reference discloses or suggests the use of snap-style connectors as claimed by Applicant. In addition, the Examiner did not address this claim limitation in the Final Rejection dated October 27, 2003.

Specifically, both Katz patents are directed to a clasp which is attached by use of a cylinder which is slidably received within a recess. This is structurally different than the snap-style connector claimed by the Applicant. While the slidable cylinder and recess may be preferred in certain cases for its security, the ease of use of the snap-style connection will be preferred in other applications, especially for those individuals who may have difficulty with manual dexterity. Although both operate as fasteners, they operate in significantly different manners and have different features.

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 7 and 16, and claims 3, 5-6, 9, 11-15 and 17-19 which depend therefrom patentably distinguish the subject invention over Katz. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Katz is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims pending in the above-identified application, namely claims 1, 3, 5-7, 9, and 11-19 are in condition for allowance and a notice to that affect is earnestly solicited.

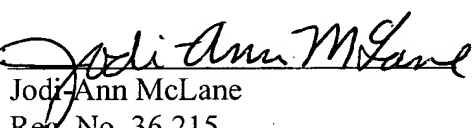
If the case is found by the Examiner not to be in condition for allowance, then the Applicant hereby requests a telephone or personal interview to facilitate the resolution of any remaining matters. Applicant's attorney may be contact by telephone at the number indicated below to schedule such an interview.

The Patent and Trademark Office is authorized to charge any additional fees incurred as a result of the filing hereof or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 19-0120.

Respectfully submitted,

Esposito, Joseph R. Jr.

By:


Jodi Ann McLane

Reg. No. 36,215

SALTER & MICHAELSON

321 South Main Street

Providence, RI 02903

(401) 421-3141

Applicants' Attorney

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